

8 July 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Morning Meeting of 8 July 1969

[redacted] Acting Director was in the chair.

D/ONE noted that SNIE 4-69, Security Conditions in Certain Asian Countries and Rumania, is scheduled for USIB consideration on 10 July. He added that he will probably recommend to the Director that a copy of the SNIE be forwarded to Dr. Kissinger with a brief note from the Director indicating the role played by OCI output [redacted] support of Presidential travel.

DD/S reported that due to engine failure a helicopter crashed in Laos, resulting in no deaths but three injuries.

Carver briefly noted his one- and one-half-hour session with Secretary Laird yesterday and said that Laird seemed to be pleased with our 3 July memorandum on Hanoi's short-term intentions.

[redacted] alluded to Maury's meeting with Congressman Henderson on the Ervin bill and commented that, while the Congressman was not very much help, he did suggest that we do what we can with the White House. General Cushman requested a briefing on what it is in the bill that causes us problems, and Houston indicated that he will comply in the near future.

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[REDACTED]

Executive Director noted General Cushman's 12 noon appointment today and briefed on the requirement contained in [REDACTED]'s note. Executive Director said that prior to the meeting he will provide General Cushman with "ball park" figures with respect to our personnel strength overseas and added that a case can be made that, as the U. S. Government reduces its overt presence overseas, there is an attendant increase in requirements for covert presence. General Cushman commented that the purpose of the meeting as described to him is not a question of whether there will be reductions but of how they are to be effected.

Acting Director observed that today's 303 Committee meeting has been postponed until 2 p. m.

Acting Director noted receipt of the Director's response to Dir 18512 and commented that, with some minor changes in the last paragraph of the Laird letter to Senator Stennis, the letter appears acceptable.

Acting Director pointed to press coverage of the emerging dispute over the threat posed to the U. S. by Soviet bombers.

Acting Director briefed on last evening's NSC executive session [REDACTED] He noted that the briefing had gone well, although there was some redundancy in his and General Wheeler's material. He noted that he will be briefing tomorrow's NSC session on Latin America.

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[REDACTED]

L. K. White

*Extracted and sent to action officer

Bomber Threat Is Disputed

By Richard Homan

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Senate Armed Services Committee has ordered a thorough Defense Department study to resolve the "wide and sharp differences" between Pentagon and intelligence community assessments of the threat posed to the United States by Soviet bombers.

The Air Force, in testimony before the Committee, outlined a threat much greater than that seen by the national intelligence estimate, a combined product of the intelligence community that relies heavily on information gathered by the Central Intelligence Agency and other agencies.

The difference is so great, the Committee said in its report released yesterday, that reliance on Air Force estimates would require funding a vast weapons system while the national intelligence estimate might permit "phasing down" bomber defenses.

See REPORT, A7, Col. 1

Hill Unit Asks Study Into Bomber 'Threat'

REPORT, From A1

For now, the Committee apparently has accepted the estimate of the national intelligence community.

It chopped the Pentagon's requests for research and development funds for AWACS (airborne warning and control system) and an improved interceptor, both part of a beefed-up anti-bomber defense proposed by the Air Force, from \$78.5 million to \$18.2 million.

The Committee said it had decided that "the threat from potential hostile bombers is not sufficiently clear and imminent at this time to justify a full go-ahead on programs which in total could ultimately involve expenditures of billions of dollars."

The cuts were part of a \$2 billion reduction made by the Committee in the Pentagon's \$22 billion proposed budget for weapons procurement and research. The bill, which includes \$759.1 million for initial deployment of the Safeguard anti-ballistic missile system, went to the Senate floor yesterday.

Though much of the testimony dealing with assessments of the Soviet bomber

threat is censored for security reasons, the major disagreements appear to be over the role of the 750 Soviet medium bombers, whether Russia is developing a new long-range bomber and whether its heavy bomber inventory will decline.

"Our study of the bomber defense issue revealed a wide and sharp difference between the national intelligence estimate and the Air Force with respect to the gravity of the Soviet manned bomber threat," the Committee report said.

"The question also arose as to whether it is not possible to effect some economies by phasing down some portions of existing bomber defenses if the present and future threat is as limited as portrayed by the NIE."

According to Committee Chairman John C. Stennis (D-Miss.), the national intelligence estimate does not consider the 750 medium bombers a threat to the continental United States, except Alaska.

Air Force Secretary Robert C. Seamans Jr. Testified, however, "These Soviet aircraft are a threat both to our allies and to the continental United States."